Tokyo native finds many friends while learning to speak English

By FRANCES ABBITT

It's a long, long way from Tokoyo to Appomattox and more than miles separate the two. Masako Seki, who was born and reared in Toyoko, and whose home is still there, didn't mind the difference when she decided that the best way to get a working knowledge of the English language was to come to the United States, hear and speak the English language.

A nurse by profession, Masako, who will be returning to Tokoyo later this month to resume her career in nursing, has been spending the past five months in the home of Miss Claudine O'Brien, a retired school teacher with the Appomattox County School Division.

With only a textbook knowledge of the English language when she arrived in this country, she's come a long way in both speaking and understanding the English language.

Masako and Claudine met through a mutual friend, Masomi Kaneda. Kaneda and O'Brien met at the University of London in 1965.

When Masako first arrived at the home of her hostess, located in rural Appomattox County, her first thought was, "Oh, it's so lonely!" After all she was used to the hustle and bustle of a large city.

"Everything moves so much more slowly here," said Masako. "I am used to everybody hurrying, hurrying, all the time."

"People here are so friendly," she said with a smile. And she has had the opportunity to see people from many different locations in the United States. She has visited New York City; Boston; Knoxville, Tennessee; Mobile, Alabama; New Orleans; Philadelphia, Pa.; New Bedford, Conn.; and Washington, D.C.

Although Masako admitted preferring the big cities (Washington, D.C. her favorite) she did develop a liking for the rural area.

"I enjoy nature, the good fresh air and being able to look at the sky and see it!"

In Toyoko, the smog is so bad the residents seldom get a glimpse of the sky as we see it here in Appomattox.

"I like being able to go out and pick flowers and greens to arrange," she added. Masako attended the O'Hara School of Flower Arranging and was also given private lessons. "We have to buy most of the flowers we use for arranging," she added.

There is no space in Toyoko for growing flowers .... hardly any room for any more houses.

"Most of the people live in apartments," she said. "Today, if I wanted to secure the land, and build a house on Toyoko, (if the land were available) It would probably cost $145,000 and it wouldn't be a big house like a lot of people in the states have."

When asked what she missed most about the food here in the states, she quickly replied, Rice and raw fish!"

The residents of Tokoyo eat rice everyday and they love raw fish. It's quite a ordinary happening for the Tokoyo residents to go the the fish market, pick the raw fish of their choice, have the man at the market place clean it and cut it in pieces. Then they can eat the fish as they continue on their way.

"Clothing prices are about the same here as in Tokoyo," commented Masako. "Clothing is made of better material; silk is used a lot there."

"The kimono is still used. We wear it for weddings, special ceremonies, parties and the like," she commented.

"My sister attended a special school and learned how to wear the kimono properly," she said. "The older people wear it often because of the comfort it affords."

Masako noted that when the kimono is worn for the special occasions, the ladies usually have their hair done in elaborate hairdos and often whiten their faces with a paste-like substance and use colorful makeup.

Most of the clothing for the younger generation in Tokoyo is western style.

"I am a Buddist," Masako said with conviction. "My parents are Buddist, my grandparents were Buddist."

"Religion in Japan is important to some people, but to most people it is not important," she said.

"Most of the people of my city only think about religion at the time of a birth, a wedding or a funeral," she added.

"The wedding ceremony in Japan is usually attended by only the family: following the ceremony, usually about 200 are invited to the reception," she said.

Weddings are often held in "a wedding reception place," what we would call a ballroom or something similar.

"We have the Buddist wedding, the Shinto wedding and the Christian wedding. I believe most people follow the Shinto ceremony," she added.

"I went to a Buddist high school," said Masako. "We all had a little book, The Kyoten."

"Only about one percent of the Japanese populaiton is Christian," said Masako.

Although Masako and her family use chopsticks everyday, they also use knives and forks occasionally.

"We take off our shoes every time we enter the house," she said. "There is a special place close to the entryway for the shoes we remove. My mother cleans the wood floors everyday."

When Masako goes home she'll have her three-year old car, a Mistsu Bishi waiting for her and a career in nursing with the science center beginning November 1. Her salary for the night shift will be approximately $875.00 a month and $750 for the other shifts. She will live at home with her parents. She has to rent a parking spot for her

[Continued on B3]

MASAKO SEKI OF TOKOYO, JAPAN, dressed in a Kimono, is pictured with two friends. Today, the Kimono is worn often in Japan by the older generation because of the comfort it affords. It is worn by the younger generation for ceremonies, parties, and various important occasions. Masako recently returned to her home following an extended visit in the home of Miss Claudine O'Brien of Appomattox.

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JERRY WOMACK, LEFT, PRESIDENT of the Pamplin Ruritan Club is shown presenting a check in the amount of $200.00 from the club to Ray Noble who accepts the check for the Appomattox County Volunteer Rescue Squad. The money came from Ruritan Community benefit fundraising projects.

Wayne Keffer named to lead 4-H organization

Wayne M. Keffer, director of the West Central Extension District at Roanoke, has been named program leader for 4-H Youth or the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service.

Bonnie S. Braun, associate dean of human resources at Virginia Tech and associate director of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, said Keffer will assume his new duties Nov. 16.

Keffer, who received his undergraduate degree from Tech in 1966, also received a master's degree at the university and a Ph.D. from Ohio State University.

Keffer joined Extension shortly after graduating from Tech as a 4-H agent in Lexington. In 1971, he was named East Central Extension District 4-H program leader at Appomattox. His responsibilities included development and management of the Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center.

He was named district agent and program leader in community resource development at Appomattox in 1976 and, in 1978, assumed the position of district agent in the Southwest Extension District at Abington. He assumed his present position in Roanoke in 1980.

Keffer has served as president of the Virginia Tech Extension Faculty Association, chairman of the conference committee for the Virginia Association of Extension 4-H Agents, regional director for the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents, secretary for the state chapter of Epsilon Sigma Phi, and member of the board of directors of the West Central 4-H Educational Center at Smith Mountain.

The Roanoke County native has received the Career Guidance Award from the National Association of County Agricultural Agents and the Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents.

He is married and the father of three children.

Wayne M. Keffer

Tokyo native visits

[Continued from B2]

automobile across the street from her parents' home. She will have to pay $20.00 per month for this privilege. Parking at her job location will be free.

"We have an emperor... he has no power, but the Japanese people, especially the older ones want him. They like the pomp and ceremony that goes with the office. To the older people the emperor is a symbol of their country. A lot of the young people feel this symbol isn't needed."

Christmas is only celebrated as a festival, no presents, no Santa, except for Christians. A "Boys' Day" in May and a "Girls' Day" in March are festive occasions. A New Year's festival is held from January 1 through 7.

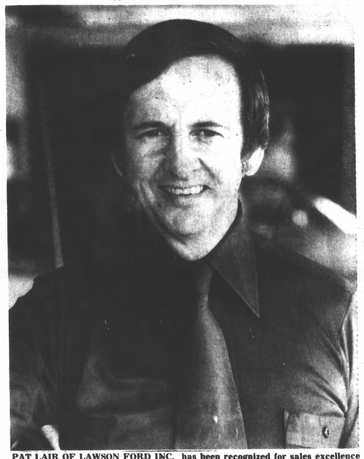
Japan, a long way from Appomattox, but Masako spanned not only the miles but the differences.

"I would like to say," said Miss O'Brien, "Masako has been the very best ambassador for her country that they could possibly have!"

Needlepoint course set

The Campbell County Recreation Department will offer a course in Needlepoint, beginning Wednesday, Nov. 2, and running through Nov. 16, from 7 - 9 p.m. at Brookville Middle School.

To register or for more information contact the Recreation Department in Rustburg - 332-5161; Lynchburg - 847-0961; Brookneal - 283-5321; and Altavista - 369-6691. Extensions 155, 156, 187.



PAT LAIR OF LAWSON FORD INC. has been recognized for sales excellence in 1983 with membership in the Society of Professional Sales Counselors. This marks the 13th time that Lair has been so honored. Pat and his wife Chamnong live at Pamplin. (Photo by Allen Austin)

'Christmas crafts' course set

The Campbell County Recreation Department will offer a course in Christmas Crafts on Tuesdays, beginning Nov. 15 and running through Dec. 13, from 7 - 9 p.m. at the Recreation Department.

To register or for more information contact the Recreation Department in Rustburg - 332-5161; Lynchburg - 847-0961; Brookneal - 283-5321 and Altavista - 369-6671. Extensions: 155, 156, 187.

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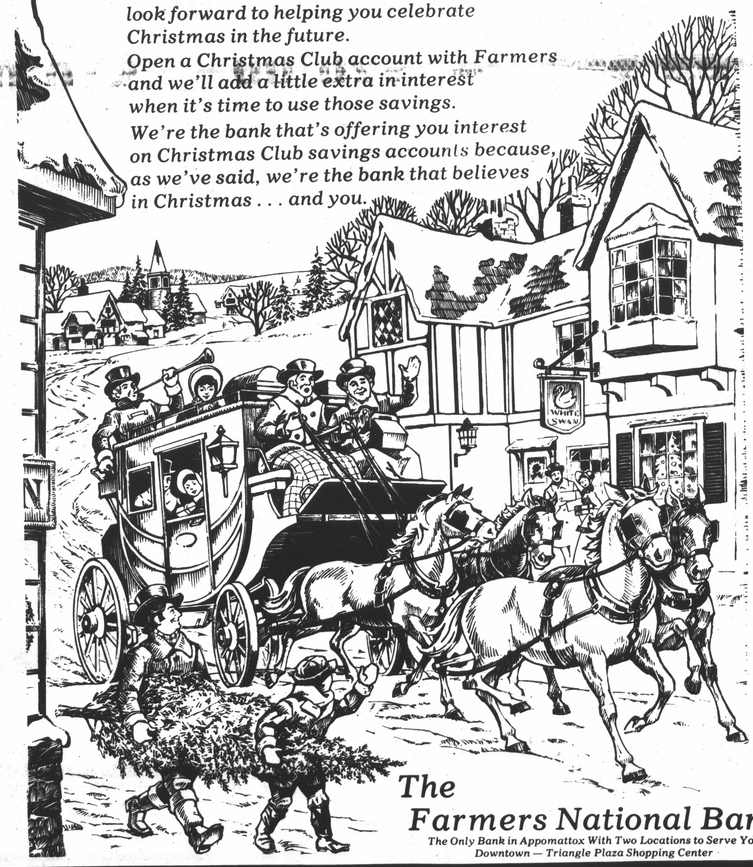

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